

From: Jason Scheirer
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 7:30pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom It May Concern,

As a young professional in the computer industry, and as having been a personal computer user for most of my life, I have watched competitors wither and disappear from the industry as Microsoft's actions have locked users into a proprietary Windows environment. I have a few problems with the Final Judgement:

B.1: Microsoft already bundles several different language display abilities with certain newer versions of Windows such as 2000 and XP. Allowing them to charge different royalties on each version, though making sense to cover costs for translation and technology adaptations, does not with an already multilingual system. This could encourage the company to split apart their language versions of Windows again. A decision like this is not beneficial to consumers, especially students of multiple languages who do not have the budget to buy a more expensive version, or separate expansion pack, of Windows when it currently does not require such an additional purchase for additional linguistic capability.

E: Along with communications protocols, there should also be a stipulation that opens file format standards and perhaps a regulatory industry committee to keep the standards compatible and open through the industry. A major reason that so many people use MS Office, aside from the OEM bundling, is because a closed set of file formats (such as Word's) make it difficult, if not impossible, to use a competing product such as Wordperfect without the application having to reverse-engineer the format. This forces the ownership of the product to exchange documents, which has caused me to buy and continue to upgrade Word though I use a competing Word Processor to be able to interchange documents with friends, family, professors and co-workers.

H.1: Microsoft should make it possible to completely remove parts of its software from the operating system if a competing technology provides similar functionality at system startup.

J.2: Require any API extension to be approved back to Microsoft. This still gives them an exclusive right to control and oversee all OS proceedings, and quite possibly reject 'non-compliant' extensions by a third party which it may interpret as a threatening or competitive technology without needing to legally justify that it is not simply violating section one of the prohibited conduct, but trying to 'maintain standards compliance'.

Also, many hobbyists and not-for-profit organizations now are major suppliers and developers of software which competes with Microsoft. These non-businesses will not be technically able to be eligible for a 'business need' to access such software. These not-for-profits are a driving force of the industry as well as indispensable tools to industry professionals: examples include the Apache group and Sendmail. Also please keep in mind that organizations may now be not-for-profit in the environment because of fear of being edged out of the industry by Microsoft's past and present practices. From the real world, many security holes from these open and not-for-profit systems have been found and have resulted in stabler, more secure applications due to open APIs and source code in some instances. For the sake of national security, perhaps some of the Microsoft APIs should be completely open to allow for outside-the-company advances in its security, which seem necessary in light of recent events with IIS worms running rampant as well as the global climate, with the U.S. being threatened by stealthier enemies, including ones who may exploit holes in the most used Operating System in the United States as a form of terrorism.

Thank you,
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